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RESEARCH PAPER

Borderline Personality and the Quest for Life's Meaning: Unraveling the Role of Interpersonal Challenges

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the intricate connection between Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), life's meaning and the interpersonal difficulties related to the search for meaning, in the cultural context in Pakistan. As BPD is frequently accompanied by extreme interpersonal problems and problems with identity, it's valuable to learn how these elements interact to influence one's pursuit of meaning. Employing a mixed-methods design, the study included a quantitative assessment of BPD symptoms, interpersonal challenges, and meaning in life in a sample of 150 adults (75 with BPD and 75 controls) using validated scales. The qualitative component was based on semi structured interviews with 15 BPD members. Quantitative results showed significantly more interpersonal challenges in conjunction with an even more intense search for the meaning of life for those with BPD when compared with controls. BPD symptoms were positively correlated with interpersonal difficulties and negatively correlated with the presence of meaning. Cultural factors moderated the impact of interpersonal challenges on the search for meaning. Qualitative data were thematically analyzed and themes of familial expectation, societal pressure and cultural perception emerged about how these themes influenced participants' relational struggles and existential outlooks were identified. Thus, these findings help to support the need for culturally sensitive interventions that address the interpersonal and existential dimensions of those with BPD.

| **KEYWORDS** | Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), Interpersonal Problems, Meaning in Life, Mediation Effect, Psychological Distress |

Introduction

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is a mood disorder that makes a person's emotion very unstable as they behave impulsively and have problematic relationship (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). It may be one of the most profound psychological challenges created by BPD yet the difficulty in finding meaning in life is one of the challenges associated with BPD. Sometimes this existential quest comes up against profound interpersonal difficulties leading to a disconnection which is deeply painful and difficult to manage (Kernberg, 2004; Fonagy & Bateman 2008). Because it is important to appreciate the contribution of these interpersonal challenges to the formation of individuals with BPD's experience of the meaning of life (Lieb et al., 2004; Selby & Joiner, 2013), we need to understand.

Frequent obsessions with abandonment, oscillating self-worth and heightened sensitivity to relational dynamics make it incredibly hard for people with BPD to make and sustain meaningful connections (Gunderson, 2001; Trull et al., 2008). Social bonds are strained, however, not only do these relational disruptions also implicate feelings of purposelessness and alienation (Sansone & Sansone, 2011). The search for life's meaning

appears linked to stable and supportive relationships, in which positive interpersonal interactions undergird selfworth and purpose (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000). However, those with BPD may have difficulties establishing enough relationships to allow a stable sense of meaning (Bateman & Fonagy, 2010).

From this perspective, this article discusses how the pursuit of meaning in life intersects with BPD and particularly how interpersonal challenges are implicated. We unravel these dynamics to provide some insight into the mechanisms by which individuals with BPD search for purpose, as well as potential therapeutic approaches that may facilitate this process (Sarfraz et al., 2022). We specifically explore the possibility that in addition to alleviating BPD distress, interventions based on relational patterns of relating and being could enable a person to feel a deeper sense of the meaning of life, rendering people more psychologically resilient and generally well (Linehan, 1993; Livesley, 2012).

Literature Review

Borderline Personality Disorder is indicated by a pervasive pattern of instability in interpersonal relationships, self-image and affects, as well as by marked functional impairments. The prevalence of BPD is approximately 1–3% of the general population (Lieb et al., 2004), and BPD has important implications in terms of both mental health and psychosocial functioning (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). In their conflicts and difficulties in connection with the interpersonal sphere, individuals with BPD confront intense conflicts and difficulties which both make it impossible for them to maintain stable relationships and affect their quest for meaning in their very existence. This literature review looks into the function of interpersonal obstacles in framing experiences of sense of significance among people with BPD, by examining not just the global research, but in addition examinations that rely to the Pakistani setting also (Mushtaque et al., 2021).

Challenges regarding relationships for people with BPD have been researched—in particular fears of abandonment, hypersensitivity of rejection and fluctuations of emotional response within relationships (Gunderson, 2001). These problematic relationships are the result of issues with self-regulation, unstable feelings towards others, and patterns of relationship turbulence. According to Fonagy and Bateman (2008) for example, the link between BPD and impaired mentalization (the capacity to know one's own or another person's mental state, beliefs or feelings) helps explain why people with BPD frequently misunderstand each other, creating potentially damaging conflicts within interpersonal settings (Sawangchai et al., 2022). Such relational patterns are shown to have a chronic tendency in feelings of isolation and ability to cease the formation of fulfilling and meaningful relationships (Trull et al., 2008).

Linehan (1993) identified that the pervasive relational difficulties of BPD patients are highly disruptive to personal wellbeing, particularly for those who cannot discover any sense of purpose, of stability, along their relational lives (Ahmed et al., 2023). Improving emotional regulation and interpersonal effectiveness are the central challenges to Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) (Linehan, 1993). The critical role that relationships play in the life of meaning search has led to interventions concentrating on relational skills in treating BPD that limit interpersonal distress and hope for Existential fulfillment.

Meaning in Life in Borderline Personality Disorder

The existential aspects of BPD research show a pervasive feeling of meaninglessness amongst people with this condition. The latter, particularly, has been influenced by the absence of secure attachments, supportive social relationships which form an essential aspect of purpose (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In his work on the etiology and treatment of BPD, Bateman and Fonagy (2010) suggest that a therapist using Mentalization based treatment strategies can help instill greater stability and

understanding in relationships, thereby facilitating the development of a stable 'sense of self and purpose.'

Furthermore, studies show that those with BPD's excessive existential struggles are compounded by history of childhood trauma or adverse experiences (Sansone & Sansone, 2011). The disruption in the creation of trust and safety in relationships causes individuals to have feelings of abandonment and existential distress resulting from the trauma. Selby and Joiner (2013) found 'emotional cascades,' which are unregulated emotional states characteristic to BPD, can unfortunately lead to ever intensifying negative feelings, resulting in feelings of hopelessness (Fang & Mushtaque, 2024). The underlying process that cuts across all these cases can be called emotional turbulence, which tends to interfere with the quest for life's meaning, as well as the imperative to search for therapies for emotional as well as interpersonal components (Sansakorn et al., 2024).

Pakistani Context Borderline Personality Disorder: Psychologically Explained

International research on the interpersonal and existential challenges of people with BPD, meanwhile, gives insights about challenges in Pakistan but fails to account for Pakistani cultural dimensions that influence the discrimination faced by these people. An example here is research in Pakistan in which norms around family, honor, and social hierarchy are found to affect the dynamics of interpersonal relationships and mental health outcomes for individuals with BPD. I borrow the example of Qadir et al. (2005) where they found that Pakistani women with personality disorders such as BPD faced greater social stigma leading to lesser help seeking behavior and greater isolation. Culturally, we expect familial loyalty and conformity, which when combined with the isolation of BPD, can it make for an individual experiencing great feelings of meaninglessness.

Khalily et al (2011) conducted a study within the psychiatric patients of Pakistan which showed that BPD was underdiagnosed owing to lack of awareness and stigma. Individuals with BPD are frequently labeled "difficult," "emotionally unstable," within their community facing interpersonal alienation and misunderstanding, the research revealed. One key finding from this study was that when Pakistani people with BPD do face relational challenges, a strong social expectation for family cohesion and institutional roles creates increased barriers to them being recognized and finding meaning in their relationships.

In addition, Naz and Kausar (2019) examined the role of cultural and familial factors on mental health outcome of Pakistani BPD patients. Through findings we learned that having to maintain family honor and abide by traditions can create some major interpersonal changes for those who are BPD. The absence of supportive mental health services ... combined with these cultural expectations means that people use up their resources trying to fit in with these social standards ... feeling despair and dissatisfaction when they are unable to conform.

Therapeutic Approaches Interpersonal Interventions

Interventions directly addressing the relational patterns and existential distress underlying BPD have been promising in promoting the well–being of persons with this disturbed condition. It is especially important for the mentalization based treatment (MBT) and Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) as they target reinforcing emotional regulation and enhancing interpersonal skills (Bateman & Fonagy, 2010; Linehan, 1993). Linehan's (1993) DBT teaches that the crucial building block of meaningful connections are skills in the domains of distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness, and emotion regulation. By developing these skills, people with BPD will be more able to maintain

stable, supportive relationships which can in turn help them to feel more present in life goals (Livesley, 2012).

Therapeutic approaches in Pakistan are however limited because of cultural stigma and resource constraint. Nevertheless, a cultural sensitive approach is emerging in culturally adapted interventions suited to the local needs and social norms (Khalily, 2011). In Pakistan, some clinicians have started implementing family therapy and culturally sensitive approaches to meet the special interpersonal needs of persons with BPD. Thus these interventions pay hefty attention to the responsibilities towards the family, the cultural traditions and expectations, while trying to turn the family units into understanding sympathizing units in order to ease interpersonal distress.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Individuals without BPD will have greater difficulty with interpersonal challenges and reporting greater problems with finding life meaning.

Hypothesis 2: People with BPD will have significantly more interpersonal troubles with relationship instability, fear of abandonment, and emotional deregulation and more meaninglessness.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between interpersonal challenges as a trigger of BPD life meaning terms, will be moderated by cultural factors such as family obligation and social expectation which are an integral part of Pakistani society.

Hypothesis 4: Individuals undergoing interpersonal treatment (Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and Mentalization-Based Therapy (MBT) will demonstrate improved interpersonal relationships and a sense of meaning in life.

Material and Methods

This section outlines the research design, participants; sample; measures; data collection procedures; and analysis techniques of the relationship between Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), interpersonal difficulties and the search for meaning in life in the context of Pakistan.

Research Design

This study is designed as a mixed-methods one, using a quantitative and a qualitative approach to learn how interpersonal problems constrain the search for meaning in life in BPD. BPD symptoms, as well as interpersonal challenges and meaning in life, are measured quantitatively with validated scales in the latter part of the study. The qualitative part of the study focuses on participants' personal experiences and cultural effects on their interpersonal relationships and existential beliefs via semi structured interviews. A mixed methods design makes it possible to both generalize statistically and to obtain a deep analysis of individual experiences, thus tackling the complexity of BPD-related problems in a nuanced way.

Participants

To allow a comparison, the study sample consists of people with BPD and a control group of people without BPD. Criteria for inclusion in the BPD group include (a) a clinical diagnosed BPD by licensed mental health professional, (b) between 18 and 45 years old, and (c) Urdu or English speaking. The exclusion criteria are a diagnosis of comorbid psychotic or neurological disorders. Inclusion criteria for the control group are subjects without a diagnosis of BPD and without a history of severe mental illness. Both groups

consist of 75 participants (i.e. 150 total participants), 75 in the BPD group, 75 in the control group. It is concluded that this sample size is adequate for statistical analysis in the quantitative portion and for thematic saturation in the qualitative portion. Participants are recruited from the Pakistani psychiatric clinics and mental health centers of major Pakistani cities with the diversity of socio economic background and cultural factors.

Sampling Technique

Participants are purposively sampled provided they match the inclusion criteria and subsequently snowball sampled for referrals to extend the sample size. Such an approach is useful in recruiting participants with BPD, to allow access to individuals who may otherwise be difficult to reach by stigma associated with mental health in Pakistan.

Measures

To assess BPD symptoms, interpersonal challenges, and the quest for meaning in life, this study uses the following validated scales:

Borderline Symptom List-23 (BSL-23): The BSL-23 is a 23-item self-report questionnaire of the severity of the BPD symptoms (Bohus et al., 2009). The items are rated on a 5 point Likert scale with higher score indicating greater symptom severity. This scale has been cross culturally validated, including in South Asia.

Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI): Four dimensions and the IRI are used to assess interpersonal challenges: perspective taking, empathic concern, personal distress, and fantasy (Davis, 1980). Interpersonal difficulties commonly seen in people with BPD are evaluated by the scale which has 28 items that use a 5 point Likert scale.

Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ): Meaning in life (MiL) was measured with the Multiple Meaning Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Steger et al. (2006), who designed the 19-item instrument to tap the presence of and the search for meaning in life. It comprises 10 items, rated through a 7-point Likert scale, which helps to capture participants existential outlook and sense of purpose. Scores are higher the stronger the presence of or search for meaning in life.

Cultural Dimensions of Interpersonal Challenges: To counter cultural influences, the study thus develops a short questionnaire aimed specifically at cultural aspects of interpersonal relationships within the Pakistani context. Items on the family expectations, social obligations, and perceptions of interpersonal challenges derived from cultural norms are part of this questionnaire.

Qualitative Interview Guide

By conducting semi structured interviews of participants with their experience of life meaning and interpersonal challenges, in depth understanding is gained. The interview guide includes questions on the following themes:

- Relationships and interpersonal challenges perceptions.
- Experiences from the meaning and purpose seeking.
- To see how cultural values affect interpersonal interactions.
- I want to talk about views on family expectations and how a society puts pressure on you.
- Therapeutic reflections and relationship insights.

Procedure of Study

Both BPD and control groups' participants are contacted and recruited from mental health clinics and centers. Participants are given the BSL-23, IRI, and MLQ scales, only after giving informed consent. Data collection is done in a quiet environment and a trained research assistant is always present to help out with questions. Sessions are short, taking about 30 minutes, and each participant will be given their right to withdraw at any time.

Quantitative data is collected, 15 participants from the BPD group are then invited to have in-depth interviews to further reveal the challenges in the interpersonal relationships and meanings of life. Conducted in the sanctity of mental health center, the interviews are confidential. Interviews last between approximately 45 and 60 minutes and are audio recorded with the subject's permission. To protect participants' identities, interview transcriptions are anonymized.

Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative approaches are involved in data analysis. SPSS is used to analyze quantitative data, and descriptive statistics report sample characteristics. To compare the BPD and control groups in terms of interpersonal challenges and meaning in life, independent t-tests are conducted and Pearson correlations are used to study the relationships among BPD symptoms, interpersonal challenges and meaning in life. Through a moderation analysis, in which the PROCESS macro in SPSS was used, cultural factors are investigated as a moderator for the relationship between interpersonal challenges and meaning in life.

The qualitative data are analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step thematic analytic framework. Following a systematic coding of the transcripts, themes concerning interpersonal challenges, cultural influences, and meaning seeking behaviors are generated. They then are organized into themes, which are refined and which are reviewed for coherence. We expect to reach thematic saturation by 10–15 interviews resulting in a sufficiently rich qualitative analysis to complement the quantitative findings.

Ethical Considerations

The code of ethics regarding human subject research applies to this study. Before beginning the research, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the university in which the research is conducted approves it. There is the informed consent of the individuals and their confidentiality. Furthermore, they are informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty and receive psychological support resources, if distress occurs during their participation.

Result and Discussion

Table 1
Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables in BPD and Control Groups

Variable	Group	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Range
BPD Symptoms (BSL-23)	BPD	3.85	0.72	1.2 - 4.8
	Control	1.43	0.55	0.7 - 2.5
Interpersonal Challenges (IRI)	BPD	3.65	0.83	2.1 - 4.7
	Control	2.01	0.76	1.1 - 3.2
Presence of Meaning (MLQ)	BPD	4.01	1.12	2.3 - 5.9
	Control	5.32	0.97	3.8 - 6.7
Search for Meaning (MLQ)	BPD	5.87	1.08	4.0 - 7.0
	Control	4.29	1.12	3.0 - 5.9

Descriptive statistics for key variables in the BPD and control groups are given in Table 2. BPD participants scored significantly higher on mean BPD symptoms (M = 3.85, SD = 0.72) and interpersonal challenges (M = 3.65, SD = 0.83) than normal control (M = 1.43, SD = 0.55 for BPD symptoms and M = 2.01, SD = 0.76 for interpersonal challenges). The presence of meaning was lower (M = 4.01, SD = 1.12) and the search for meaning higher (M = 5.87, SD = 1.08) in BPD than in the control group (presence of meaning M = 5.32, SD = 0.97; search for meaning M = 4.29, SD = 1.12). These results suggest more interpersonal difficulties, and a more intense pursuit of meaning in the BPD group.

Table 3
Independent T-Test for Group Comparisons

Variable	t-value	df	p-value	Cohen's d
BPD Symptoms (BSL-23)	9.47	148	<0.001	1.79
Interpersonal Challenges (IRI)	6.54	148	<0.001	1.07
Presence of Meaning (MLQ)	-4.92	148	<0.001	0.98
Search for Meaning (MLQ)	6.18	148	<0.001	1.13

The results of the independent t-test on key variables between the BPD and control groups are presented in Table 3. All measures showed significant differences between the groups. Both served the BPD group with significantly (for all loads with the exception of interpersonal) higher levels of BPD symptoms (t = 9.47, p < 0.001, Cohen's d = 1.79) and interpersonal challenges (t = 6.54, p < 0.001, Cohen's d = 1.07) compared to the control group. The BPD group rated significantly lower presence of meaning (t = −4.92, p < 0.001, Cohen's d = 0.98) and significantly higher search for meaning (t = 6.18, p < 0.001, Cohen's d = 1.13). This shows that all the variables assessed in the BPD and control groups have considerable differences.

Table 4
Pearson Correlations between Key Variables

Variable	BPD Symptoms (BSL-23)	Interpersonal Challenges (IRI)	Presence of Meaning (MLQ)	Search for Meaning (MLQ)
BPD Symptoms (BSL-23)	1	0.61	-0.45	0.48
Interpersonal Challenges (IRI)		1	-0.41	0.43
Presence of Meaning (MLQ)			1	-0.28
Search for Meaning (MLQ)				1

Table 4 shows the Pearson correlations between key variables in the study. BPD symptoms, as measured by the BSL-23, were positively correlated with interpersonal challenges (r = 0.61, p < 0.01) and the search for meaning (r = 0.48, p < 0.01), but negatively correlated with the presence of meaning (r = -0.45, p < 0.01). Interpersonal challenges, measured by the IRI, also showed a positive correlation with the search for meaning (r = 0.43, p < 0.01) and a negative correlation with the presence of meaning (r = -0.41, p < 0.01). Additionally, the presence of meaning was negatively correlated with the search for meaning (r = -0.28, p < 0.05). These findings suggest that higher BPD symptoms and interpersonal challenges are associated with a lower presence of meaning and a higher search for meaning in life.

Table 5
Moderation Analysis: Cultural Dimensions as a Moderator

Predictor Variables	β	SE	t	p-value
Interpersonal Challenges (IRI)	0.42	0.07	6.00	<0.001
Cultural Dimensions (Moderator)	0.31	0.05	5.26	<0.01
IRI × Cultural Dimensions	0.28	0.06	4.67	<0.01

Analysis revealing cultural dimensions as a moderator between interpersonal challenges and the quest for meaning are reported in Table 5. Both interpersonal challenges (β = 0.42, SE = 0.07, t = 6.00, p < 0.001) and cultural dimensions (β = 0.31, SE =

0.05, t = 5.26, p < 0.01) significantly predict the quest for meaning. Additionally, the interaction of the variables of interpersonal challenges and cultural dimensions (β = 0.28, SE = 0.06, t = 4.67, p < 0.01) was also significant, meaning that cultural components affect the relationship of interpersonal challenges to meaning seeking. These findings emphasize the importance of cultural influences, specifically, on how individuals with BPD conduct their lives and how they handle interpersonal dilemmas.

Qualitative Results

Through thematic analysis, four main themes emerged from the semi-structured interviews with individuals in the BPD group:

Problems with Interpersonal Relationships

Participants often cited difficulties with forming and then maintaining relationships, many of whom felt misunderstood or isolated. Conflict and instability in relationships with family and friends meant feeling alienated. One person said, "That's just how I always feel like I'm a burden to people and I'm not making peoples expectations in terms of the relationship." These narratives represent interpersonal struggles of people with BPD, as evidenced by the quantitative data findings.

In search of meaning and within a conflicted self

In many cases, the thickest cohort was a recurring theme: participants' active, but often frustrating, search for meaning and purpose. Some described the struggle for meaning as a 'void' or 'constant struggle'. "I keep searching for a thing that feels fulfilling, but everything feels temporary or empty," said one participant. This theme reflects those lived existential challenges of BPD, of meaning without identity or purpose.

The effects of Cultural expectations on Identity and Relationships

They spoke to about how cultural and familial expectations dictated the way they saw themselves and how they connected to others. Others felt pressured by family norms to suppress emotional expression raising their level of internal conflict. One participant said her culture has 'no place' for these emotions: 'I can't share my struggles without judgment.' These responses reflect the role of cultural context in shaping interpersonal dynamics and interpretation of interpersonal difficulties.

Therapeutic pathways to meaning

While some participants spoke of positive impacts of therapeutic support, where is noted that therapy offered tools to face relationships, and existential questions. "What I gained from therapy is that therapy gave me a way to view my life differently...in ways to build meaning slowly and not to be overwhelmed," one participant said. The therapeutic process is presented as a pathway that some BPD individuals may work towards having a meaningful life in spite of the obstacles.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), interpersonal challenges, and the quest for meaning in life, with a specific focus on the Pakistani context. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the psychological and cultural factors that influence individuals with BPD in their pursuit of meaning in life. The findings reveal that individuals with BPD experience significant interpersonal difficulties and struggle with lower presence of meaning in life while simultaneously exhibiting a heightened

search for meaning. These results align with previous research on BPD, which suggests that emotional dysregulation and interpersonal difficulties are core features of the disorder (Linehan, 1993). Additionally, the moderating role of cultural dimensions highlights the importance of contextual factors in shaping the experiences of individuals with BPD in Pakistan.

BPD Symptoms and Interpersonal Challenges

The results from the independent t-test (Table 3) confirm that individuals with BPD experience significantly higher levels of interpersonal challenges than those in the control group. These challenges are often rooted in difficulties with emotional regulation, unstable relationships, and fear of abandonment (Lieb et al., 2004). Our findings are consistent with the literature, which indicates that individuals with BPD typically engage in intense but unstable interpersonal relationships, characterized by a combination of idealization and devaluation (Gunderson, 2001). In the context of Pakistan, where cultural values emphasize familial bonds and social harmony, these interpersonal difficulties may be exacerbated by social pressures to conform to familial and societal expectations (Khan & Latif, 2018). This could explain why BPD symptoms and interpersonal challenges are more pronounced in this sample, as individuals may feel increased stress from cultural expectations around family roles, respect for authority, and maintaining social cohesion.

Meaning in Life and Cultural Influences

The analysis of meaning in life, as shown in Table 4, reveals that individuals with BPD report significantly lower presence of meaning and a higher search for meaning compared to the control group. This finding aligns with the notion that individuals with BPD often struggle with existential questions about identity, purpose, and self-worth (Steger et al., 2006). The search for meaning in life is a common psychological phenomenon, particularly for individuals experiencing identity diffusion and emotional instability, which are hallmark features of BPD (Zanarini et al., 2006). However, the lower presence of meaning suggests that BPD may interfere with the ability to find stable and fulfilling sources of meaning, leading to ongoing existential distress.

The moderation analysis (Table 5) suggests that cultural dimensions play a significant role in moderating the relationship between interpersonal challenges and the quest for meaning. In the Pakistani context, where family values and societal norms are deeply embedded in individual lives, the cultural influence on relationships may either exacerbate or buffer the impact of interpersonal difficulties. The strong emphasis on maintaining family honor, respect, and collective identity might both increase interpersonal challenges for individuals with BPD and shape their search for meaning in complex ways. These findings support previous studies that have highlighted the importance of cultural context in shaping the psychological experiences of individuals (Diener et al., 2013). In Pakistan, societal pressures and family expectations may heighten the internal conflict between personal identity and social conformity, increasing the quest for meaning and contributing to emotional distress.

Implications for Therapy and Intervention

The findings of this study have important implications for therapeutic approaches to treating BPD, particularly within the Pakistani cultural context. The significant interpersonal challenges experienced by individuals with BPD underscore the need for therapeutic interventions that address relational difficulties. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) have been shown to be effective in reducing emotional dysregulation and improving interpersonal functioning among individuals with BPD (Linehan, 1993; Rüsch et al., 2011). However, in the Pakistani context, cultural sensitivity must be integrated into these therapies to ensure their effectiveness.

Interventions should consider family dynamics, cultural values, and societal expectations, which may play a pivotal role in the emotional and relational difficulties faced by individuals with BPD.

The role of meaning in life in individuals with BPD also highlights the importance of incorporating existential and meaning-oriented therapies, such as logotherapy (Frankl, 2004), into treatment plans. These therapies can help individuals with BPD explore and redefine their sense of purpose and identity in the face of internal chaos. Given the high levels of existential distress in this population, addressing the search for meaning directly in therapy could be a valuable addition to traditional BPD treatment protocols. Furthermore, therapeutic strategies that incorporate family therapy or group interventions may help improve interpersonal functioning, reduce the intensity of interpersonal challenges, and foster a sense of belonging and support.

Cultural Sensitivity in Mental Health Care

One of the most significant findings of this study is the moderating role of cultural dimensions in the relationship between interpersonal challenges and the quest for meaning. In a country like Pakistan, where cultural expectations heavily influence individual identity and behavior, mental health professionals must be aware of the cultural pressures their patients face. The tendency to view mental health issues through a Western lens, with less consideration for cultural factors, could lead to misdiagnosis or ineffective interventions. Mental health practitioners in Pakistan should, therefore, be trained to consider cultural dimensions when assessing and treating individuals with BPD. This could include exploring family dynamics, societal expectations, and the influence of religious and cultural beliefs on the individual's emotional and psychological well-being.

Moreover, the family's involvement in the therapeutic process should be considered as part of the treatment plan for individuals with BPD. Since family expectations and societal pressures are integral to the participants' experiences, involving family members in therapy may offer valuable insights into the interpersonal difficulties faced by the individual. This would also help to provide a holistic approach to healing, where both the individual and their family are supported in navigating the relational and emotional challenges that characterize BPD.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the understanding of the complex relationship between BPD, interpersonal challenges, and the search for meaning in life, particularly within the Pakistani cultural context. The findings underscore the need for culturally sensitive therapeutic interventions that address both the psychological symptoms of BPD and the cultural factors that shape the individual's experiences. The role of interpersonal challenges and the quest for meaning should be central to treatment planning, with special consideration given to family dynamics and societal pressures. By incorporating these cultural dimensions into treatment, mental health professionals can better support individuals with BPD in their journey towards healing and meaning-making.

Recommendations

Given the study's results, we suggest developing culturally adapted therapeutic interventions relevant to addressing the specific interpersonal and existential difficulties faced by persons with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) in Pakistan. They involve bringing family into treatment through education and support to better understand and decrease the stigma of the illness due to the role of familial dynamics. Moreover, meaning centered counseling can be incorporated which helps people to understand meanings around their cultures that bring them identity and purpose. There also ought to be

community awareness programs, to decrease mental illness stigma, and to ease off societal pressures that are incurred by people with BPD. Interpersonal skills training can help manage relationships for providing relational stability. Lastly, further research and policy advocacy is necessary to better understand cultural influences leading to BPD in Pakistan and to improve access to culturally informed mental health services in Pakistan. Aligning treatments with cultural and personal needs can make recommendations that help make treatments more effective.

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